

GEORGE A. ROMERO™

EMPIRE OF THE DEAD

ILLUSTRATED BY
ALEX MALEEV

003

MARVEL

**PARENTAL
ADVISORY!
NOT FOR KIDS!**

EMPIRE
OF THE
DEAD
003



**PAUL
BARNUM**



**PENNY
JONES**



XAVIER



**MAYOR
CHANDRAKE**



**BILL
CHANDRAKE**

Welcome to New York

THE EMPIRE ~~STATE~~ OF THE DEAD

FIVE YEARS AFTER THE DEAD FIRST WALKED, NEW YORK CITY HAS BECOME A FORTRESS OF ISOLATION AGAINST THE UNDEAD PLAGUE. THE MILITARISTIC FORCES OF MAYOR CHANDRAKE KEEP THE STREETS RELATIVELY SAFE AND THE SURVIVORS ENJOY GLADIATORIAL GAMES IN WHICH CAPTURED ZOMBIES FIGHT FOR FOOD. PENNY JONES, A MEDICAL SCIENTIST, TEAMS UP WITH A SKEPTICAL ZOMBIE WRANGLER NAMED PAUL BARNUM TO FIND A WAY TO TAME THE UNDEAD, NAMELY ONE CALLED XAVIER, A CAPTURED ZOMBIE WHO EXHIBITS INTELLIGENCE. BUT ZOMBIES AREN'T THE ONLY MONSTROUS THREAT TO NYC. THE CITY'S ELITE, INCLUDING MAYOR CHANDRAKE, ARE ALSO ANOTHER FORM OF THE UNDEAD...VAMPIRES! BUT THERE IS DISSENSION IN THE RANKS. AUSTERITY HAS CAUSED THE VAMPIRES TO LIVE OFF RAT BLOOD, BUT SOME, INCLUDING COUNCILMAN CHILLY DOBBS, BELIEVE THE ELDERS AREN'T LIVING WITHIN THE SAME CONSTRUCTIONS AS THE REST...

GEORGE ROMERO
WRITER

MATT HOLLINGSWORTH
COLOR ARTIST

ALEX MALEEV
ARTIST & COVER ARTIST

VC'S CORY PETIT
LETTERER

ARTHUR SUYDAM
NYC VARIANT COVER ARTIST

IDETTE WINECOOR **PETER GRUNWALD**
PRODUCTION PRODUCER

JAKE THOMAS
ASSISTANT EDITOR

BILL ROSEMANN
EDITOR

AXEL ALONSO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

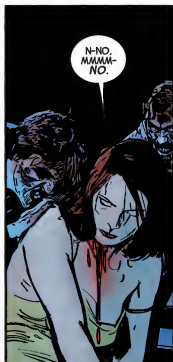
JOE QUESADA
CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER

DAN BUCKLEY
PUBLISHER



DOWNTOWN.

NOW WE
WAIT. GOTTA
MAKE SURE THE
GARBAGE GETS
PICKED UP.



N-NO.
MMM-
NO.



NOOOOOO!

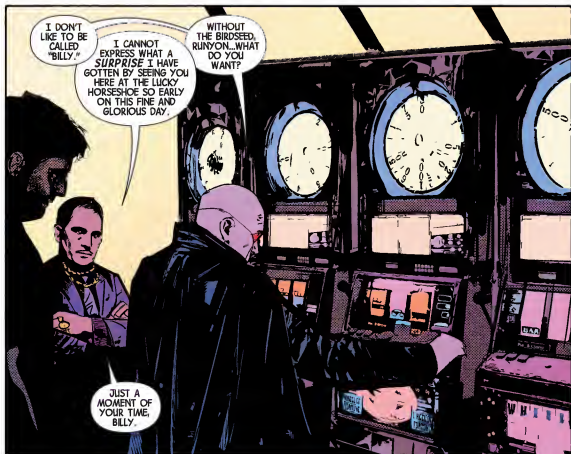
I THOUGHT
THEY ONLY WENT
AFTER *LIVING*
FLESH.



THIS
WOMAN WASN'T
COMPLETELY SPENT.
THERE'S ENOUGH LEFT
ALIVE IN HER.

NEAT.

YES. A NEAT
AND CLEAN WAY
TO GET RID OF
EVIDENCE.





CENTRAL PARK ZOO;
THE ARENA.

XAVIER,
THRUST!

GOOD.
THAT'S
VERY, VERY
GOOD.

THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO AIM AT THOSE
HOLES IN THE HELMETS, SPEAR IN THE
BRAIN IS A SURE KILL, BUT ZOMBIES
ARE TOO UNCOORDINATED TO EVER
HIT A SPOT THAT SMALL.

YOUR
ZOMBIE?

CHANDRAKE
TURNED XAVIER
OVER TO ME,
BARNUM. THANKS
FOR PUTTING IN
A GOOD
WORD.

READY TO
TRY THIS FOR
REAL, SIR.

MY
ZOMBIE
MIGHT BE
ABLE TO.



I'M NOT SURE I CAN ALLOW THAT. XAVIER IS NO LONGER UNDER MY JURISDICTION.

GO AHEAD. I'D LIKE TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

SHE COULD GET INJURED, PENNY. MIGHT FINISH HER DAYS AS A FIGHTER.



I DON'T WANT HER TO BE A FIGHTER. I WANT HER TO BE A PEACEMAKER.



IS SLOBBY ONE OF YOUR TOP GUNS?

ZANZIBAR'S MY HEADLINER. LITTLE FEMALE CALLED PEANUTS IS MY SECOND BEST. SLOBBY'S MY NUMBER THREE.

YOU MIGHT LOSE HIM, RIGHT HERE.

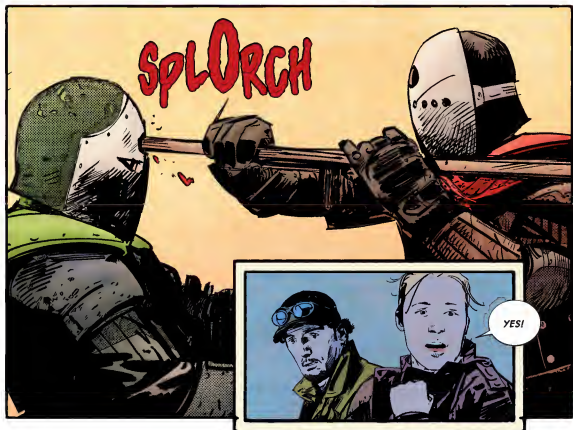


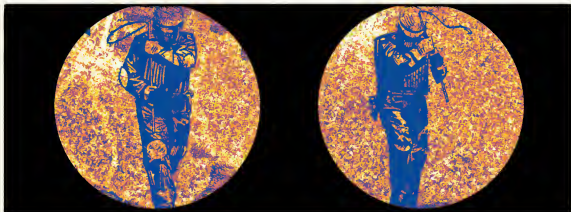
NO SPASTIC FLESH-EATER CAN HIT THAT THREE-INCH MARK WITH A LONG-HANDLED SPEAR.

THESE NEW ARMORS ARE DESIGNED TO KEEP OUR GLADIATORS ALIVE. WOUND 'EM, CHOP A FEW FINGERS OFF, THE FANS LOVE IT. BUT WE DON'T WANNA KILL 'EM. CERTAINLY NOT AFTER THEY'VE BECOME POPULAR.



I'M TELLING YOU, IF YOU DON'T STOP THIS LITTLE EXERCISE, YOU RUN THE RISK OF LOSING YOUR NUMBER THREE.







CHANDRAKE'S PENTHOUSE.

FOR CENTURIES... POSSIBLY LONGER...

CENTURIES. GOT IT. MAYBE LONGER.



...HUMANS HAVE THREATENED US WITH EXTINCTION.

NOW THE WORLD IS THREATENED BECAUSE OF THIS NEW KIND OF...DEAD THING.

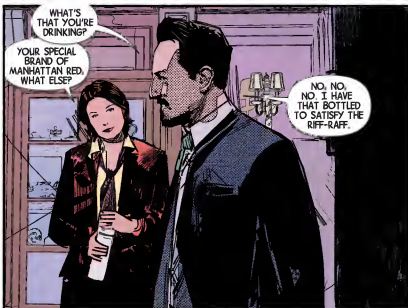


THAT IMPLIES THERE IS AN "OLD" KIND OF DEAD THING, WHICH MEANS *US*! POLITICAL SUICIDE IF PEOPLE REALIZE THAT WE'RE ALSO LIVING DEAD.



OKAY, MINDY, HOW'S THIS? OVER THE YEARS, MAN HAS BEEN OUR NEMESIS. BUT ALSO OUR NOURISHMENT.

LISTEN, YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THAT YOU NEED TO BE RE-ELECTED AS MAYOR OF NEW YORK. NOT THE MAYOR OF BLOOD-SUCKING NEW YORK.



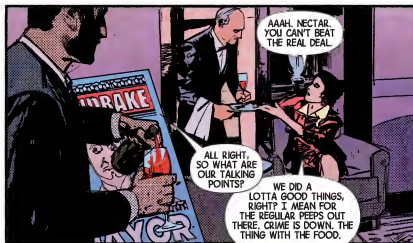
WHAT'S THAT YOU'RE DRINKING?

YOUR SPECIAL BRAND OF MANHATTAN RED. WHAT ELSE?

NO, NO. NO. I HAVE THAT BOTTLED TO SATISFY THE RIFF-RAFF.



BRANIGAN, BRING US A BOTTLE OF THE... FRESHEST.



AAAH, NECTAR.
YOU CAN'T BEAT
THE REAL DEAL.

ALL RIGHT,
SO WHAT ARE
OUR TALKING
POINTS?

WE DID A
LOTTA GOOD THINGS,
RIGHT? I MEAN FOR
THE REGULAR PEEPS OUT
THERE, CRIME IS DOWN, THE
THING WITH THE FOOD.



NOT THIS.
I MEAN
REGULAR
FOOD.

CROTON-ON-HUDSON.

"WE CULTIVATE GRAINS.
BREED OUR OWN CATTLE.
GROW OUR OWN VEGETABLES..."



"MINDY, I SPENT TWENTY
MILLION BUILDING A
GODDAMNED ARENA
TO KEEP YOUR 'PEEPS'
HAPPY, DIDN'T I?"

"EXACTLY. THAT'S
THE KIND OF STUFF
THAT GETS YOU
EVERYBODY'S VOTE."



I KNOW WE NEED
EVERYBODY'S VOTE. I
KNOW I NEED TO BE
THE MAYOR OF ALL THE
PEOPLE. BUT HERE'S
WHAT YOU DON'T
UNDERSTAND...



OUR PEOPLE
HAVE BEEN
ACCUMULATING
WEALTH AND POWER
FOR HUNDREDS OF
YEARS. THEY FINANCE
THESE CAMPAIGNS.
THEY FINANCE
YOU.

IF I DON'T
HAVE THEIR
CONFIDENCE, IF I
CAN'T PROTECT THEIR
SECRET AND GIVE THEM
FRESH BLOOD TO
SUSTAIN THEMSELVES,
I HAVE NOTHING.
NOTHING!

THE DAY I
LOSE SUPPORT
IS THE DAY I WAKE
UP WITH A STAKE
IN MY CHEST!

NEAR COLUMBIA
UNIVERSITY.



THEY
FOUND
ME.



RELAX.
IT'S ME,
FOURTEEN!



I THOUGHT
YOU WERE
GONNA ARREST
ME.

NO, I BEEN
TRYIN' TO CATCH UP
WITH YA, CHILLY. I JUST
WANNA SAY THAT I'M
WITH YA ALL THE
WAY. CHANDRAKE'S
A RAT.



MAKIN' US
DRINK RAT'S
BLOOD.

WHERE
CAN WE GET
A REAL
DRINK?

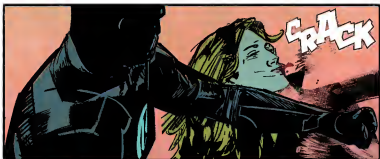


MOMENTS LATER.



DON'T BE
AFRAID. I'M A
POLICEMAN.

I GUESS
I'LL BE SAFER
WITH YOU THAN
JUST ABOUT
ANYBODY.



CRACK

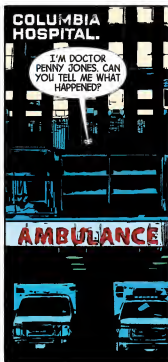


BRING HER
HERE.



NOTHING
IS THIS
GOOD!





I'M DOCTOR PENNY JONES. CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED?



TWO GUYS. DROPPED HER LIKE A HOT POTATO AND TOOK OFF.

THERE ARE WOUNDS PRETTY MUCH ALL OVER HER BODY.

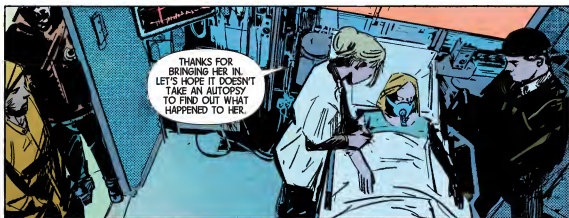


BLOOD LOSS IS REMARKABLE, BUT THERE'S NOTHING OBVIOUS...PHYSICAL EXAM, MRI, NOTHING... TO EXPLAIN WHY SHE SEEMS TO BE... DYING!

COULD ONE OF THOSE FLESH-EATERS HAVE... BITTEN HER OR SOMETHIN'?



SOME OF THE WOUNDS DO LOOK LIKE BITES, BUT...IT'S NOT NEARLY WHAT WE FIND WHEN A FLESH-EATER GETS HOLD OF SOMEONE.



THANKS FOR BRINGING HER IN. LET'S HOPE IT DOESN'T TAKE AN AUTOPSY TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO HER.

EAST 14TH STREET.







BENEATH CIRCUS MAXIMUS.

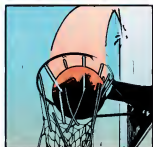
"CIRCLE."
LEARN THE
WORD.

AND THIS
IS A "SQUARE."
LEARN
THE WORD. NOW...
POINT TO THE
SQUARE.

HEH.
GUESS I'M A
SQUARE.

IT'S SO...
FRUSTRATING! IT'S
NOT THAT SHE DOESN'T
UNDERSTAND. I'M PRETTY
SURE SHE DOES, SHE
JUST DOESN'T SEEM
TO CARE!

I WOULDN'T CARE,
EITHER, NOT ABOUT THOSE
FLASH CARDS. I'D WANT
SOMETHING A BIT MORE...
CHALLENGING.



AN HOUR LATER.

I TOLD YER
BOSS HE COULD HAVE
AS MANY SHOTS AS HE
WANTED, BUT THIS IS
RIDICULOUS!



BOSS, YOU
BEST GET OUTTA
HERE. THERE'S SOME
FOLKS AIN'T LIKELY
TO 'PRECATE
WHY—

WHY WE'RE
SHOOTING
HOOPS WITH A
FLESH-EATER.



I THINK
IT'S TIME
TO GO, MY
FRIEND.



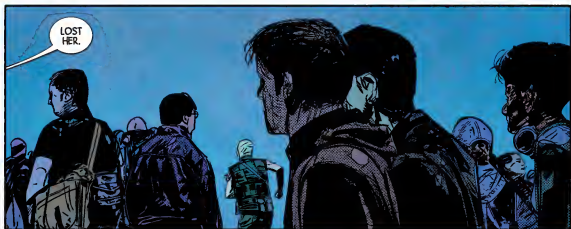
NO, EGSHAKI
WANT MORE.
IOPV MORE! TR



WE NEED
TO GO.

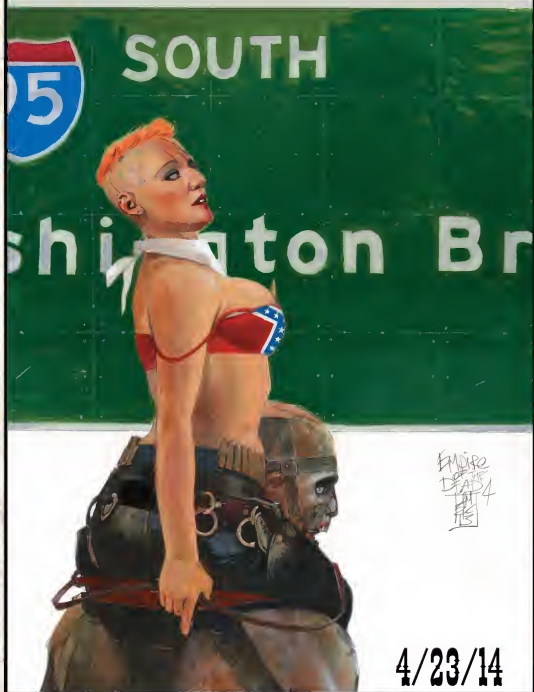


WE GO, AIOPI
SDYES, GFWSFJ
JKLWOT GO, BY



TO BE CONTINUED...

NEXT: WHISTLIN' DIXIE PAST THE GRAVEYARD!





WALKER

